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—BY—

REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND, M.A.
Minister of the First Unitarian Church,
Toronto, Canada.



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By REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND, M.A.

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A REPLY TO DR. TORREY'S ATTACKS UPON REASONABLE RELIGION

My belief has long been (and I know this is the judgment of many ministers not only of my own, but of other denominations) that the work of religion can be carried on more wisely, more constructively, and with results which in the end are far better, by pastors and Churches themselves, than by bringing in professional revivalists, with their excitements, their forcing processes and their more or less sensational methods.

However, although not favoring the revivalistic movement which is being carried on at Massey Hall by Dr. Torrey and Mr. Alexander, I should quietly have left it to take its own course and to accomplish such good as it might, and certainly I should have spoken no public word in opposition to, or in criticism of, it, if it had gone on its own way peacefully and in the spirit of Christian good-will. But it has not done so. Dr. Torrey had hardly begun his work before he gave warning that no quarter would be shown to what is called the "higher criticism," that is, to the broader, more progressive and more modern biblical scholarship. This he stigmatized as 'tearing the Bible to pieces,' or 'cutting the Bible to bits,' and all converts were advised (and the advice has been repeated again and again) to join no Churches where this is practiced or tolerated.

Nor have his attacks been confined by any means to the higher criticism of the Bible, but have been numerous and severe upon all the broader and more liberal forms of religious thought. I knew that this had been to a considerable extent his course in the States and in England, and that thus he had alienated from his work many pastors of Congregational, Presbyterian and other Churches. But I trusted that when he came to Toronto we might see a change for the better. I am sorry to say we were disappointed. As the days have gone on and these utterances have continued, I have

said to myself: Are there none to speak out in protest, as so many clergymen and biblical scholars in England and the United States have done, against this persistent and uncalled-for attempt to arrest the progress of biblical free inquiry and learning, to turn us back to the theology of 300 years ago, to stifle that broadening and liberalizing spirit which is beginning to appear in so many quarters and which is one of the finest characteristics of Christianity in our time, and to revive in place of it a dogmatism of the narrowest and most illiberal type? I wish there were others in Toronto to take up this task instead of myself. But as yet, at least, there do not seem to be. I have no right, therefore, to shrink from the duty.

What is this higher criticism which Dr. Torrey so fiercely assails? It is simply the most competent, the most unbiased and the most reverent scholarship of the Christian world setting itself to the task of finding out as fully and accurately as possible the facts regarding the origin and authorship of the various books and parts of the Bible, the circumstances under which they were composed, the purpose for which they were written, and what the different writers really meant by what they wrote. The scholars who are doing this important work of giving us this new and more thorough biblical knowledge are not infidels, or skeptics or reckless iconoclasts, as Dr. Torrey would have us believe, nor are they confined to any one Church or any one form of Christian faith. On the contrary, they belong to every Church and denomination. They are the leaders of biblical scholarship in the principal universities and theological schools and seats of highest knowledge in the world. They are not only men of far larger learning than Dr. Torrey can for one moment claim to possess, but they are also men whose piety and whose love for the Bible are surely quite as deep as his own. If the great and devout scholars of every Christian land, of whose united labors for a hundred years the higher criticism is the result, cannot be trusted, who can be?

True, here and there a scholar rejects the new scholarship, the new knowledge, the new light; but such rejectors are very

few, and nearly all are among the older men who, because of their age, find it difficult to fall in line with the progressive thought of the time; or else they are men trained in some school of religious doctrine (of which the school of Mr. Moody, to which Dr. Torrey belongs, is a conspicuous type), which closes men's minds against religious advance, believing that thus it does God's will.

Does Dr. Torrey realize, and do the pastors who united to bring him to Toronto realize, how serious a thing it is for a man to come here and spend a month in a persistent effort to shake the confidence of the public in our best and highest biblical scholarship, and to awaken in the Churches of all denominations distrust of the honored men to whom we have committed the training of our ministry and the creation of our religious literature? Will the gathering of a few converts into our Churches make good this wide and lasting injury done to religion?

Dr. Torrey never tires of condemning the higher critics for tearing the Bible to pieces. But is there any higher critic who tears it to pieces so badly as do men like himself, who turn the whole volume into a thesaurus of texts, isolated texts, unrelated texts, texts torn bleeding from their contexts, texts seized upon without any reference to who wrote them or what the writers had in mind, texts gathered from no matter what part of the Bible, and used to confound sinners or infidels with, or to afford fancied support to doctrines which in many cases the writers of the texts never heard or dreamed of? The higher critic at least seeks to find what the original writers said and meant. The preacher or theological debater, whose armory is the Bible regarded as a book of texts, does not aim, in his tearing the Bible to fragments, to find out what the writers were trying to say. His aim is to find in his text what he himself wants it to say, to read into it the meaning that he thinks it ought to have, and then to use it as a stone to build into the walls of his theological edifice, or a pebble for his theological sling, to hurl at some foe. For tearing the Bible to pieces I have never seen any higher critics that came near to equalling Dr. Torrey and Mr. Moody and their school.

As is well known, one can make history teach anything, or any book mean anything, by picking and choosing. You can find in Shakespeare whatever you will, by choosing isolated, fragmentary and unrelated passages. By the same process one can prove anything from the Bible. The explanation of the existence of two or three hundred different Christian sects all drawing their doctrine from the same Scriptures, is found right here, in this evil practice of picking and culling texts to build doctrines on. A man may prove from the Bible the duty of immediate suicide. "Judas went and hanged himself." Matthew 27: 5. "Go, and do thou likewise." Luke 10: 37. "That thou doest, do quickly." John 13: 27. There, you see, I give you chapter and verse. How can you hesitate to obey these plain commands of the Bible? How many preachers sin in this way with texts! But where is there a sinner of this kind that can surpass Dr. Torrey, as we hear him every day in Massey Hall? Truly, the higher critic is not the only man who tears the Bible to pieces.

The Bible ought to be studied rationally, and in the light of the fullest knowledge attainable from any and every source, just as we would study any other book. What is known as the higher criticism is just such study. How can such study injure the Bible? His faith in this great book of the ages must be small who has any such fear. The biblical scholarship of our time may disturb—doubtless is disturbing—certain theories about the Bible, formed in darker ages than ours; but it cannot hurt the Bible itself. Everything in its pages that is true or ever was, everything that ever had any power to help the moral or spiritual life of man continues undisturbed. If anything is purged away it is dross; the gold all remains. Instead of the higher criticism being, as Dr. Torrey affirms, harmful to the Bible and religion, I believe candid study of the matter shows that its influence is to make the Bible a more valuable book of religion and morals; to open the way for its study in schools and colleges; to give us a larger and truer conception of revelation and inspiration; to make religion more reasonable, more broad, more human, more progressive; to elevate the spirit above the letter; to break down sectarian

lines and bring Christians nearer together, and to give Jesus a more central place in the Bible and religion.

This is as much as time permits me to say to-night in defence of the higher criticism. I shall give the subject a more extended consideration in another discourse.

I pass now to my main theme of the evening: Dr. Torrey's many attacks upon reasonable religion. And let me say in the beginning that by reasonable religion I mean the religion of Jesus. I believe the greatest teacher of such religion that the world has produced was the great prophet of Nazareth. And I believe that Dr. Torrey in attacking reasonable religion attacks Jesus and his gospel.

I do not think the gospel of Dr. Torrey is the gospel of Jesus; it is the gospel of the theologians, of the speculative thinkers, of the system makers, of the creed constructors, living in later times, who had wandered far away from the simplicity, the reasonableness and the spirituality of the great teacher. Of course it has in it certain elements that come from Jesus; but not its central elements. That which Dr. Torrey makes central, that upon which he lays an overwhelming emphasis, that which he makes the essential of salvation, namely, belief in a certain theory or doctrine about Jesus, to the effect that he was God, and that by his death as God the Son, he appeased the wrath of God the Father, and paid the penalty due for man's sins, and thus in this sense became man's saviour—that doctrine, or theory, which Dr. Torrey insists upon as the gospel, and acceptance of which he makes necessary to salvation, I do not find anywhere in the teaching of Jesus. As I read the first three gospels, those which go back nearest to the time of Christ, and therefore which are most to be relied on for information as to what he taught, I do not find anything that even looks in the direction of any such doctrine. Read the Sermon on the Mount, the most extended summary that we have of the teachings of the Master; does that contain anything about this theory or dogma of Dr. Torrey? Not a word. Read the matchless parables; read all those utterance of wisdom and love and life that fell from the great teacher's lips; surely they will be full of it, if it was his gospel,

the message that he had come from heaven to deliver. But they are all silent. Nowhere is any such theory or dogma or doctrine taught or hinted. What is it that we do find? The religion of Jesus as it appears in the earliest gospels has in it no theological scheme of any kind. It has nothing to do with any fall of the race in Adam, or any speculative trinity, or any atoning sacrifice of blood to placate God and make him willing or able to be kind to men. It is simply the religion of love, of duty, of pity and tenderness, of the Golden Rule, of the Lord's Prayer, of a divine humanity, of God's Fatherhood and man's brotherhood, of human service, of the pure heart and the right life. These things, just these, were what Jesus preached as his gospel. And how the beauty, the sweetness and the power of such a gospel stirred men's souls in Jesus' day, as it also stirs men's souls whenever it is preached in our day.

The most hopeful sign in the religious world at the present time is found in the fact that there is a growing recognition of this that I am saying. With this recognition the cry is being raised in many quarters, "Back to Jesus!" Many causes, prominent among them the new and more intelligent study of the Bible, have been operating for a generation or more, to open the eyes of thoughtful men all over Christendom to the fact that Christianity has wandered far away from its founder, into regions of spiritual barrenness and death. For centuries on centuries the real Jesus of the gospels and the real religion that he taught, have been largely hidden out of sight under mountains of theological speculations, under systems of doctrine founded not upon his teachings, under creeds formulated with polemic and sectarian ends in view, and under ecclesiastical rites alien to the simple worship which he enjoined. None too soon has a movement arisen to shake off this crushing mountain load, to return back from these disastrous wanderings to the Jesus of the gospels, and to the simplicity, the reasonableness and the spirituality of the religion which he taught. I speak of this as a movement back to Jesus. We must not understand, however, that in the ordinary sense of the word it is retrogressive, or that its

aim is to resist progress. On the contrary, it believes in progress. It goes back to Jesus because thus it is able to shake off the theological and ecclesiastical chains with which Christianity has been bound. It goes back to get power and inspiration to go forward. It goes back to plant itself upon those great intuitions of the soul, upon those universal religious principles, upon those central truths of all ethical and spiritual religion which Jesus recognized as the necessary conditions of progress, and which create progress wherever they appear.

This is the liberal religious movement of our time. It believes in reason. It believes in freedom. It believes in the Bible interpreted in the light of the largest knowledge. It believes in the religion of the open mind, instead of the religion of the fixed creed. It believes in a living God of a living man, and that God's revelations of truth are not all confined to the far-away past. It deeply believes in Jesus, in the life he lived and the religion he taught; and with love and honor and loyalty it takes him for its leader.

What is Dr. Torrey's relation to this movement? It is the relation of opposition—of strenuous antagonism. It must be so, because the banner under which he marches is not that of the Jesus of the gospels, but the banner of the theological Christ—the Christ of the creeds and dogmas and theological systems formed in those dark centuries when the Christian Church had wandered so far away from the simple and reasonable religion of its founder.

What is the relation of Unitarians to this movement? They believe in it, and from the beginning have been active in its promotion. Is it strange then that Dr. Torrey is hostile to them? What is the relation of the more liberal minded and progressive men in other Churches—in Churches calling themselves orthodox—to this movement? They, too, in a greater or less degree are friendly to it, and are helping it on. Is it strange then, that they too, come under Dr. Torrey's lash?

It is encouraging for those who are associated with this movement to reflect that all the influences of advancing civilization are with them. Knowledge is their ally. Science

helps them. Biblical scholarship works powerfully for them. The spirit of inquiry tells constantly and everywhere in their favor. So does the spirit of progress. Reason is on their side. So is conscience. So are the deepest spiritual instincts of free souls. Helped thus by the mightiest and the noblest forces of the moral world, can there be any doubt as to the final outcome of the new movement?

It should be borne in mind that it is teachings like Dr. Torrey's that drive men like Rev. Mr. Horsman of the Walmer Road Baptist Church out of their pulpits. It is teachings like his that inflict on Toronto the disgrace of refusing to open churches to a distinguished and devout scholar like the late President Harper, of Chicago, when he honors our city by coming here in response to an invitation from one of our institutions of learning, to deliver a Convocation address. It is teachings like Dr. Torrey's that drive men like Professor Mitchell, of Boston, out of the theological schools of the Methodist Church, and men like Professor Swing, of Chicago, and Professor Briggs, of New York, out of the Presbyterian Church, and men like Professor Toy, of Harvard, out of the Baptist Church, and men like Rev. Howard MacQueary out of the Episcopal Church, and that tend to put a ban upon honest thinking in all the Churches.

Dr. Torrey tells us that there is no such thing as salvation by character; that to say there is, tends to destroy souls; that if a man possessed the best and most perfect character in the world, and had not done what Dr. Torrey calls "accepting Christ," he would be lost; indeed, that if the world were full of men of such character, and if they were unconverted, they would all go to perdition. In answer to this amazing teaching, let me tell a story. In a certain town where there is a Congregational Church, a new minister who had been called, was to be ordained. A council had been convened for the purpose. After a general statement by the candidate of his religious experience, theological convictions, ideas about salvation and so on, he was called upon, as was customary, to answer such questions as any member of the council might choose to ask, and among those asked was this, which was

addressed to him by an old minister whose theology was much like that of Dr. Torrey: "What, sir, would you say were the chances of salvation of a man of respectable life and conduct who tried to do his duty, and endeavored to obey the commands of God—one whom you might call a righteous man, or a man with an excellent character—but who had never consciously accepted the atonement offered by our Saviour?" A profound silence followed, while the candidate stood for a moment with bowed head. Then he raised it and gave his answer: 'Righteousness is salvation. Character is salvation.' Was he not right? Notwithstanding anything that backward-looking men who get their belief not from Jesus, may say or do, we may be certain that the creed of the future regarding salvation will be just that. Righteousness is salvation. Character is salvation. Every other kind of salvation, so-called, is in its very nature unreal. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood." "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?" "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." The test at the Judgment scene, said Jesus, will be not professions, not beliefs, but deeds—feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and those in prison.

Dr. Torrey tells us that the doctrine of God's universal Fatherhood is false. If that be so, of course it follows that the doctrine of man's universal brotherhood is false. Is he prepared to say that all men are not brothers? He declares that the world is divided into two classes, "children of God" and "children of the devil," and that all persons who have not accepted Christ, according to his (Dr. Torrey's) method of accepting Christ, are children of the devil. I think Jesus would have been startled if he had heard that. If there was anything that was dear to Jesus it was the thought of God as a Father—not only his Father, but the Father of all men, all his human brothers, high and low, rich and poor. He taught

all men in sorrow, in disappointment, in weakness, in temptation, in sin to go to God as their Father, for comfort, for hope, for strength, for forgiveness, for help according to their needs. In that model prayer which he gave to the world he taught all men to say "Our Father, who art in heaven." These facts do not look much as if Jesus thought that God's Fatherhood is limited, and that nine-tenths of the human race are not His children at all, but children of the devil.

Paul, too, was as much mistaken as Jesus, if Dr. Torrey is right, for Paul says in Ephesians, "There is one God and Father of all."

By the way, speaking of the Lord's Prayer, reminds me that in none of Dr. Torrey's services that I have attended has he made any use of that prayer. Perhaps it was an accident. For aught I know he may have used it at other meetings. But when I found him teaching that a large part of the people everywhere, and indeed, all outside of his religious set, are not children of God at all, but children of the devil, I wondered if that might not be the explanation of the non-use of the prayer. Of course it would not be proper to teach any of the children of the devil in Massey Hall to say, "Our Father, who art in heaven." Their proper prayer would be, "Our Father, who art in hell."

Of the thousands of children that have gathered in Massey Hall at the different childrens' meetings, only a fraction are reported as converted. Of course all the rest were children of the devil. What lovely children the devil does have! And how sweetly they sing the praises of God! I think Mr. Alexander must have felt this, even if Dr. Torrey did not.

Is there a mother or a father here to-night who has a sweet babe at home? When you go home to-night, and make your way to its room and bend over it as it sleeps, and kiss its cheek, and thank God with happy tears for his unspeakably precious gift, stop! stop! Dr. Torrey bids you stop, and remember that what you see before you is a child of the devil! Jesus took the young children in his arms and blessed them, and said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

"Their angels do always behold the face of my Father."
"Except ye become as little children ye cannot enter the kingdom." Which shall we believe, Dr. Torrey or Jesus?

Dr. Torrey tells us that Unitarians have no access to God, and no salvation; and also that Trinitarians who reject his view of the atonement are in the same condition. Well, that means, I think I may safely say, that hell will have some fairly good society, when we come to count among its population William Cullen Bryant, Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, James Russell Lowell, Julia Ward Howe, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Senator Hoar, Charles Sumner, Phillips Brooks, Henry Ward Beecher, Edward Everett Hale, President Eliot of Harvard, President David Starr Jordan, of Leland Stanford, Dean Stanley, Dr. Martineau, Frederick W. Robertson, George Macdonald, Benjamin Jowett, Tennyson, Browning, Ruskin, Florence Nightingale, Stopford Brooke—to name only a few; for all these persons belong in one or the other of these two last classes, Unitarians, or Trinitarians who reject what Dr. Torrey regards as the true and the only saving view of the atonement.

Once on a time some one with a belief somewhat like that of our good Massey Hall doctor, published in a Boston paper the declaration that Emerson, if he died would go to hell; because he was a Unitarian. Father Taylor, the famous Methodist sailor-preacher read it, and exclaimed, "Emerson in hell! that good man! Why it would turn the tide of emigration that way."

If Dr. Torrey's theology is beyond hope of improvement, it is at least a pity that he does not have some sense of humor, for I think that even that would save him from making some of the statements which he now so recklessly makes.

Before leaving the statement that Unitarians have no access to God, let me ask whether any of you have had your attention called to the very large number of hymns—hymns of the deepest and tenderest devotion—that are the productions of Unitarians, and yet that are being introduced into the hymnals of all denominations, and are becoming universal favorites with devout worshippers of every religious name.

A few months ago Dr. Washington Gadden, one of the most distinguished Congregational clergymen and writers in the States, said in an article in one of the periodicals of his denomination: "The largest number of the best hymns written within the past twenty-five years, have been written by Unitarians. . . . While some of us have been busy hunting heresy, the Unitarians have been trying to find utterance for their religious feeling." Perhaps no other single hymn is so widely sung and so much loved by worshippers of every religious communion, as "Nearer my God to Thee," written by Sarah Flower Adams, an English Unitarian. Hardly second to this in universality of use and popularity is "In the Cross of Christ I Glory," written by the eminent English Unitarian, Sir John Bowring. The hymns of Bryant, Holmes, Whittier (the Unitarian Quaker), Stopford Brooke, Martineau, Samuel Johnson, Samuel Longfellow, Chadwick, Hosmer, Gannett, and many others, are scarcely less in favor. Do men who have no piety in their souls write the hymns of worship of an age? Well, even if we ourselves have "no access to God" we are at least glad if we may be of some service to others in helping them to lift up their hearts in love, in trust, in worship, in devout communion with the Father of all.

In his last address on the Bible in St. James' schoolhouse, Dr. Torrey told a story of a man who had "run around with infidels, Unitarians, Theosophists, Spiritualists, and Christian Scientists until he had become an agnostic."

Well, I pass over the taunt at Unitarians implied in this passage; and I leave Theosophists and Spiritualists and Christian Scientists to speak for themselves, as of course they prefer to do; but I want to say very plainly that any one who says that Unitarianism tends to produce agnosticism, knows not whereof he affirms. The truth is the exact opposite. It tends to cure agnosticism. That is the testimony and the record everywhere. And why does it have this power? First, because it does not send the agnostic to hell, but treats him with respect; and second, because it offers him a reasonable religion, one that appeals to his intelligence and all that is highest and best in his nature.

Nor does Unitarianism tend to produce infidelity or unbelief or atheism, as Dr. Torrey so constantly asserts. To say it does is a cruel slander. The truth is, nothing about Unitarianism is more conspicuous than its influence in leading men to faith. This is what our ministers everywhere find. If ministers of other denominations understood us, they would rejoice in our work, because we are able to lead so many to faith whom they cannot. I speak from a large experience, bearing upon this particular matter. For many years I was pastor of a Church at the seat of the largest of the American State Universities. What did I find among those thousands of students? Hundreds and hundreds of young men who had lost their religious faith. What had been the cause? Most often unreasonable and unworthy views of religion, the Bible and God, similar to those which Dr. Torrey teaches. What was the remedy? In nearly all cases I found it to be rational and worthy views of religion, the Bible and God.

Thinking men do not give up their religious faith from choice. When men turn their backs on the Bible or God, we may know, in nine cases out of ten, that the trouble is with the ideas which have been taught them on these subjects. Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Wherever Jesus is lifted up before the eyes of men in the real beauty and greatness of his character, does he not draw all to him? So with God—show God to men in the loveliness and perfectness of his character, as Jesus taught us to see Him, and does He repel any? Does He not sooner or later win all? So, too, with the Bible. Teach men true, rational, intelligent, worthy views of it, such as our broad-minded, forward-looking, reverent scholars are everywhere more and more teaching, and we need have no fear of infidelity concerning it. Such teaching will save the Bible, and will save the people. This illustrates the work that Unitarian Churches everywhere are doing. They are not leading men to infidelity. They are saving men from infidelity. By offering them a reasonable religion they are winning men to faith in God and in the highest things that the human soul can know.

Dr. Torrey declares, and repeats the declaration over and over, that Jesus "was either God or else he was an impostor"—indeed, he puts it in much stronger language, and says, he was either God or else "the most damnable impostor that the world ever saw." I don't know why he uses the word "damnable." The man on the street would have said right out "damned," and then Dr. Torrey would have pointed to him as a lost soul. I suppose the revivalist thought that by changing the word just a little he could ease the matter off, and give vent to his not very loving or Christ-like feeling, without quite technically swearing.

I am surprised that an intelligent man who is acquainted with the Gospels of our New Testament could suggest, much less urge, such an alternative. However, it is urged, and it should be answered. I am ready to answer it. But to do so as fully and completely as I should like, would require more time than I have at my disposal to-night. I shall therefore reserve the subject for a full discourse to be given soon. I think I shall be able to show you in that discourse that if an alternative in connection with this subject exists at all, it is not that of "God or an impostor," as Dr. Torrey claims, but the alternative "man or an impostor."

Dr. Torrey last Wednesday told a touching story of a little girl whose father, a bank cashier, had been sent to prison for defalcation. One day at school a companion said to the little girl, "Your father is a thief." It was like a cruel blow in her face. It staggered her. She hurried home. She would not go to school again. She idolized her father; and now to have this awful thing said about him! it broke her heart, and in a little while she died. Dr. Torrey, referring to that word spoken to that little girl, exclaimed: "Oh, the heartless cruelty of it!" Yes, but how light was its cruelty compared with his own cruelty! For what is he doing? Telling thousands of girls and boys wherever he goes, that their fathers and mothers are worse than thieves; for he declares that every father or mother who has not "accepted Christ" according to the theological recipe repeated so constantly in Massey Hall, is guilty of the greatest sin and crime in all this

world. Is not that cruelty? Nor is that the worst. Wherever he goes he tells children whose parents have died without getting his kind of salvation, that those parents are writhing in eternal flames. And the same thing he tells parents about their children, and brothers about their sisters, and sisters about their brothers, and husbands about their wives, and wives about their husbands. Is not that cruelty? The little girl died from the shock of having her father called a thief. How is it that men, women and children by the thousand do not die, die of broken hearts, or else go insane, over the infinitely more shocking things that Dr. Torrey is telling them about their dearest loved ones?

One of the subjects that Dr. Torrey has made most prominent throughout his whole series of meetings is that of hell. It has not been incidental with him, but central. He has devoted several entire discourses to it, and his references to it have been almost numberless. It is the black and awful background of all his theology. The object of his mission is to save men from hell. His most telling appeals are connected with stories of death-beds of men and women and children who either were saved from hell by accepting Christ in time, or else were lost because they delayed too long. Nor is he any more modest in describing hell and its horrors than in declaring who will go there. Some preachers who profess to believe in hell, and a hell of eternal pain, do not very often speak of it, seeming to think it not quite a fit subject for ears polite. When they do refer to it, it is in a veiled and softened way. Not so Dr. Torrey. And is he not right? Is not his course the honest and honorable one? If any preacher or any man believes that a hell of endless torment awaits people all around him, he ought to be as much in earnest and as outspoken as is Dr. Torrey, and if possible ten times more so. Dr. Torrey does not even represent the fires of hell as figurative. He says they may be figurative; but if so the figure falls short of expressing the dreadfulness of the reality. But as for himself he believes the fire is real, is literal fire; and in that literal fire the unsaved—all who do not take Christ according to his formula, will burn for ever, will

have physical bodies provided them, he tells us, of a nature to burn and suffer forever and not be consumed. I say, if a man is so unfortunate as to hold such a horrible belief, the only honest thing possible for him is to cry aloud and spare not, and lift up his voice like a trumpet. But how a man is to be pitied whose life is cursed and whose universe is blackened by such a belief!

Let us look at this doctrine of eternal torments as candidly and fairly and dispassionately as we can.

What are the objections which intelligence and piety find to it? If this doctrine is taught in the name of the Bible (and that is the ground on which Dr. Torrey teaches it—he confesses that but for the Bible he would be compelled to throw it away, it is so horrible)—if it is taught on supposed Bible authority, then it places upon the book which we all love and honor, a burden too heavy for it to bear. But the truth seems to be, the Bible does not teach it, when properly understood. Doubtless the teaching of the Bible is that the laws of retribution extend on into the future life. There will be punishment there, as there is punishment here. But it will be just punishment, not infinitely unjust. It will not be one and the same hopeless doom for all. It will be meted out according to deserts. It will be governed by the law of moral cause and effect. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." "That servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes."

The punishments of the world to come will be disciplinary and for the good of those who receive them, not retaliatory or inflicted from motives of vengeance. They will be the dealings of a Father with his children. And they will come to an end. To continue them for ever would be to defeat all purposes of beneficence, all ends of justice. The adjectives in the Hebrew and the Greek which are translated in our Bible as "eternal" and "everlasting" in connection with hell and future punishment, are words which do not necessarily mean endless, for they are used again and again in other

parts of Scripture to express periods of time which certainly terminate. Says Archdeacon Farrar (and I quote him because he was a distinguished preacher and scholar, not of my own Church but of the Church of England): "I ask you, what would be the popular teachings about hell, if we calmly and deliberately erased from the Bible the three words, 'damnation,' 'hell' and 'everlasting'? Yet I say unhesitatingly, I say claiming the fullest right to speak with the authority of knowledge, I say with the calmest and most unflinching sense of responsibility, that not one of these words ought to stand any longer in the English Bible."

These words of Archdeacon Farrar are fully justified in the light of present biblical scholarship. There can be no question that this doctrine of an eternal hell turns many men against Christianity. Says Stopford Brooke, the great English preacher and writer: "We ought to fight against the lies of this doctrine day by day; for we, who do not believe it, have no notion of the harm it is doing to those who do believe it. We are bound to contend against it if we have any desire that a nobler Christianity should prevail among men, for its teaching drives men into infidelity and atheism." Go to railers against Christianity, and this doctrine of a hell of endless torment inflicted upon men for the shortcomings of this brief earthly life, is almost certain to be their main point of attack. Go to sincere doubters, who are troubled and in darkness over things connected with Christianity which they cannot explain or understand, and usually you will find that the leading cause of their doubt and trouble is this dark doctrine.

This doctrine also breaks the hearts of Christians. Thousands of the best and devoutest souls of every denomination that teaches it, experience anguish that is simply unutterable over the thought of what it means. All that is best within them revolts against it. They only believe it amid their tears and because they feel that they must. Several years ago the Rev. Dr. John A. Faulkner, an eminent Methodist divine, and Professor in the Drew Theological Seminary in New Jersey, published an article in the *Methodist Review*, expressing strongly the conviction that the doctrine that "the great

majority of men are doomed to an eternity of awful torments" has been a fruitful cause of disbelief of the whole Christian system. He declares that "it has made sad the hearts of those whom God has not made sad. It has turned the hopes of thousands of devout believers into ashes, and filled the souls of God's children with tormenting doubts and dark forebodings as to their own salvation and the salvation of their friends." And what wonder? How can such a doctrine fail to have such results with thoughtful and earnest minds? The only occasion for surprise is that men can hold it and keep their reason. Oliver Wendell Holmes says: "Any decent person holding such an opinion ought to go mad; it is very much to such a one's discredit if he does not."

A not less weighty objection to the doctrine of an eternal hell is, that it virtually dethrones God. Certainly it dethrones the God which Jesus taught us to believe in. It no longer leaves us a God of love; it no longer leaves us a God of justice; it no longer leaves us a God whom we can call in any real sense whatever a Father. A Father cannot damn his children for ever.

But even this is not all. If there is an eternal hell of suffering, then there is no heaven; there can be no heaven. Writes Robert Buchanan in his song of "Doom":

"Were I a soul in heaven
Afar from pain,
Yea, on Thy breast of snow,
At the scream of one below
I should scream again."

Could heaven be heaven for any human beings with millions suffering in hopeless woe—and among them some of their own dear ones? Mother, tell me what would golden streets and white robes and golden harps be to you, if your children were over yonder in torments—all of them or any of them? Are you happy on one of these brief earthly days when your child is sick, and turns restless on its bed, moaning and white with pain? How happy, then, could you be in the eternal day with your child in unutterable agonies, and you powerless to render aid?

Do you recollect Gerald Massey's lines?—

"I cannot believe in endless hell
And heaven side by side. How could I dwell
Among the saved, for thinking of the lost?
With such a lot the best would suffer most.
Sitting at feast, all in a Golden Home,
That towered over dungeon-gates of Doom,
My heart would ache for all the lost that go
To wail and weep in everlasting woe;
Through all the music I must hear the moan,
Too sharp for all the harps of heaven to drown."

You who have read Geo. Macdonald's "Robert Falconer" will remember that faded, brown letter, written with trembling hand by Mrs. Falconer, just before her death, and which came at last to the lost Andrew. "Oh, Andrew, I feel as if I should lose my reason, when I think that you may be on the left hand of the judge, and I can no longer call you *my love*. . . . I couldn't be happy in heaven without you. It may be very wicked, but I do not feel as if it were, and I can't help it if it is. . . . Before you get this I shall be all gone to dust, either knowing about you, or else trying to praise God, but always forgetting where I am in my psalm, *longing so for you to come*. I am afraid I love you too much to be fit to go to heaven. Then, perhaps God will send me down to the other place, all for love of you, Andrew. And I do believe I should like that better."

Ah, friends, would it not be so with us all? I think earth has never heard such prayers as would go up from every part of heaven to God, from mothers, fathers, wives, children, that in mercy he would allow us to go and share, even if we could not alleviate, the pain of our suffering loved ones.

No, if there is a world of endless, irremediable suffering for any, then the whole race is undone. Heaven is only a name. Hell is all. The knowledge of a world of helpless woe would hush every golden harp. It would break the heart of every inhabitant of heaven. It would break the heart of Christ. All must be saved at last, or else none can be.

But we need not fear. God is not going to be defeated in His universe. His eternal purpose is one of good to humanity,

and it will not suffer wreck. Dr. Torrey is wrong; Jesus is right. Whatever retribution God has for men on the other side of the grave, means love, not hate; it means reform, discipline, redemption, not damnation. God is a Shepherd. No sheep will wander from His fold in any world that He will not seek, and sooner or later find and bring back. God is Father; we may trust Him for ever, sure that He will watch and wait with deathless love, until the last prodigal among His human children comes home.

What is Unitarianism?

It is Christianity in the light of the Twentieth Century. It is the religion of reason and the human heart. It is the religion of the Lord's Prayer, the Golden Rule, and the two Great Commands of Love to God and Love to Man. It stands for deeds, not dogmas; for hope and trust and worship, not creeds; for freedom of thought and progress, not for bondage to the past; for earnest and united effort to build up the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. It teaches that the truest service of God is service of humanity.

Who Are Unitarians?

The following are a few names of eminent English Unitarians:—Dr. James Martineau, the great philosopher and preacher; Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, the eminent preacher and writer; Frances Power Cobbe, the writer and philanthropist; Sir Henry Roscoe, the scientist; Sir Sidney Waterlow, the donor to London of Waterlow Park; the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain; the Earl of Carlisle; the Principal and Professors of Manchester College, Oxford; Sir Henry Tait, the founder of the "Tate Gallery," and many libraries and public institutions; Robert Hibbert, the founder of the Hibbert Trust, which has done so much for literature and education; Mary Carpenter and Florence Nightingale, the philanthropists; Dr. W. B. Carpenter, the scientist; Mrs. Humphry Ward, the distinguished novelist; Sir John Bowring, the poet and statesman, author of the hymn,

"In the Cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time."

John Pounds, the founder of ragged schools; Mrs. Barbauld and Mrs. Gaskell, the writers; Sarah Flower Adams, author of the hymn,

"Nearer my God, to Thee;"

Dr. Priestley, the theologian and discoverer of oxygen; Sir Isaac Newton, the discoverer of the law of gravitation; Locke, the great philosopher; Milton, England's second greatest poet.

A still larger number of the greatest men of America have been and are Unitarians, including such names as Franklin, Webster, Calhoun, Sumner, four Presidents of the United States; several of the most distinguished Chief Justices; Horace Mann, the greatest American Educator; Presidents Charles W. Eliot of Harvard University, and David Starr Jordan of Leland Stanford; Senator Hoar, Hon. John D. Long, Hon. Carroll D. Wright; Agassiz the scientist; Peter Cooper, the philanthropist; Channing, Theodore Parker, Dr. Savage, Robert Collyer, Emerson; the Historians Bancroft, Motley, Prescott, Parkman, and John Fiske; such women as Mrs. Julia Ward Howe and Mrs. Mary Livermore; Literary men like Hawthorne, Thoreau, Higginson, and Edward Everett Hale, and Poets like Longfellow, Bryant, Holmes and Lowell. **Is not a Religion believed in by such minds worthy of the attention of thinking men?**

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